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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 USNATO 000414

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SUBJECT: NAC DISCUSSES COUNTER-PIRACY COORDINATION ROLE FOR
NATO

Classified By: CDA John A. Heffern for reasons 1.4 (B)&(D).

¶1. (C) Summary: At the September 23 NAC, PermReps discussed counter-piracy, specifically a September 22 letter from SACEUR to the Chairman of the NATO Military Committee (CMC - see para 8). Allies discussed what NATO's best value-adding role might be off the Horn of Africa. Several Allies who have not been strong supporters of NATO's counter-piracy operations seemed more open to the idea, with France stating that they were "open to anything that would improve coordination of actors in the field." Greece requested a briefing from the EU on lessons it had learned as a result of its counter-piracy operation. Mission believes SACEUR's letter provides an excellent opportunity to define a coordinating role for NATO in international counter-piracy efforts, playing to NATO's expertise. We urge a positive response from Washington on these proposals - see para 8. End Summary.

¶2. (C) The Deputy Secretary General noted that the piracy issue consisted of more than just military operations off the coast of Somalia: there was NATO's involvement in the Contact Group for Piracy off the Coast of Somalia (CGPCS); the efforts of the International Staff to produce a draft comprehensive legal framework on detention, transfer and prosecution; and the issue of regional capacity building, which NATO Joint Forces Command Lisbon had been studying recently. On the legal front, the Legal Advisor was working with the governments of Kenya, the Seychelles, Tanzania and Djibouti on agreements which would facilitate the transfer and prosecution of pirates detained by Operation OCEAN SHIELD. Draft agreements had been submitted to each government.

OCEAN SHIELD UPDATE

¶3. (C) In an operational briefing, the International Military Staff (IMS) said that the deterrence and escorting portions of OCEAN SHIELD had been "fully activated" and that NATO was in the initial stages of assisting in regional capacity building. OCEAN SHIELD, however, still did not have the resources which would allow it to conduct two other Military Response Options -- military actions at sea and intervention operations -- which had been envisioned in the Operation Plan. The Chairman of the NATO Military Committee said resources that would be particularly welcome included air and reconnaissance assets and a dedicated tanker. He asked Allies to look into contributing these items, even if for only a limited time. The IMS noted that OCEAN SHIELD currently operated with the five ships from Standing NATO Maritime Group 2 (SNMG 2), but that Standing NATO Maritime Group 1 (SNMG 1) would take on that role in November. The Danes noted that they would be contributing to SNMG 1, while reiterating the importance of resolving the legal issues relating to detention.

COUNTER-PIRACY COORDINATION: A ROLE FOR NATO?

¶4. (C) CMC Di Paola then briefed PermReps on the letter he had just received from Supreme Allied Commander Europe, Admiral Stavridis, regarding the way ahead for Operation OCEAN SHIELD (text of letter reported in para 8). He cited SACEUR's suggestion of a Maritime Air Operations Cell in the region to help align and defragment counter-piracy air operations among the various players. This was clearly an area where NATO had useful expertise and clear doctrine to contribute to international efforts. Di Paola also touched on mil-mil capacity building and the possibility of maritime mentorship for regional states as areas where NATO could add real value. The coordination international intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) efforts was also cited as an area where NATO could offer strong contributions, particularly in the form of analysis of raw data.

¶5. (C) The major point of the letter, however, was that NATO had the opportunity to better coordinate international counter-piracy participants, including the EU's Operation ATALANTA and the Combined Maritime Forces' Task Force 151. In addition, the SHared Awareness and DEconfliction (SHADE) Meeting in Bahrain has proven to be an effective coordination platform for CTF-151, ATALANTA and OCEAN SHIELD, and SACEUR believes that there is increased scope for NATO to work through shade with national contributors such as China and Russia.

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ALLIES POSITIVE ON THE IDEA, BUT AWAIT MILITARY ADVICE

¶6. (C) PermReps lamented the lack of advance notice on the SACEUR letter and noted the need for military advice on his proposals, but overall responded positively to SACEUR's ideas. The French PermRep noted that she was "open to anything that would improve coordination in the field." Italy felt SACEUR's proposals for a greater role in coordinating counter-piracy efforts were a step in the right direction. Both Ambassador Daalder and the Canadian PermRep noted the need for a well-thought out NATO strategy on counter-piracy, and believed SACEUR's letter was a positive step. While noting that he had only just heard these ideas, Daalder said that SACEUR's letter seemed to spell out exactly the type of activities that NATO should be doing which would add value to the fight against piracy. Someone had to coordinate these efforts, Ambassador Daalder noted, and NATO has the necessary expertise. Canada said that Allies should explore NATO providing enablers to other counter-piracy actors. Turkey noted that it had been a supporter of NATO counter-piracy activities from the outset, believing that the Alliance's experience added value. At the same time, Turkey noted that SACEUR's proposals would need to ensure that all existing "modalities" were adhered to, an obvious reference to the perennial problems in NATO-EU relations.

REQUEST FOR EU BRIEFING

¶7. (C) Greece requested that the EU be invited to brief Allies on "lessons learned" from the EU's Atalanta counter-piracy operation, arguing that sharing information on this topic was important because events indicate that piracy will not be over soon. The UK agreed, but said that this briefing could be at a lower-level, such as the Policy Coordination Group, if it would make arranging it easier.

¶8. (C) Comment: The thrust of SACEUR's letter, calling for action on a number of fronts, struck a positive nerve with

Allies and should lead to active Allied discussions in appropriate channels. If there is energetic support by the U.S., the possibilities for having NATO play a greater role in coordinating air, sea and other counter-piracy operations such as regional capacity-building appear to be firmer than before the release of the letter. This coordination role will also provide an excellent opportunity to see whether EU-centric Allies are interested in maximizing NATO's capabilities in the fight against piracy. We urge a positive response from Washington to these proposals. End comment.

19. (C) Begin text of September 22 letter from SACEUR to Chairman of the Military Committee, Admiral Giampaolo Di Paola:

OPERATION OCEAN SHIELD - CONTRIBUTING TO THE WAY AHEAD

In light of the discussion to take place within Council on the 23rd of September concerning Operation OCEAN SHIELD I felt this might be an opportune time to make you and the nations aware of some of the ways in which NATO can possibly add further value to the international community's efforts to fight piracy off the Horn of Africa. You will see that the focus of many of the ongoing efforts and proposed initiatives currently being staffed within ACO are squarely aimed at exploiting potential synergies while running parallel operations with the European Union and Coalition Maritime Forces, as well as several national initiatives.

While remaining cognizant of the key issues of the required legal framework and limitations on resources that continue to constrain NATO's counter-piracy operation, it is important to recognise that with the flexibility given us in the OCEAN SHIELD Operations Plan, NATO can still exploit its unique capabilities and competencies to perceptibly add value to the international counter-piracy effort. Some of the ways in which we can employ NATO's strengths include:

Command and Control: Counter-piracy air operations are currently largely dislocated and fragmented. By employing existing NATO doctrine and competence, the Alliance can demonstrate capability and resolve by acting as the catalyst for improved air coordination. With a slight increase in manpower, NATO could lead in the establishment of a common coalition Maritime Air Operations Cell in the region, providing the necessary focus and doctrinally sound basis for counter-piracy air activities - creating a more centralised

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'command' function for improved effect.

Capacity Building: NATO's experience with this line of operation can prove to be a critical enabler to the international community's efforts, not only through the political level's continued support of the UN Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia efforts, -but through ACO's expertise, military to military contacts and the possibility of offering maritime mentorship where needed. Specifically, NATO can contribute the depth and skills required to enable an effective assessment, conduct gap analysis, develop regional assistance plans and generally serve to drive forward this vital element of the broader plan.

Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR): NATO strengths can be brought to bear to improving the international intelligence effort by taking the existing raw data being generated and conducting a timely and effective assessment. This will enable a more proactive approach to counter-piracy operations, vice the current reactive mindset. One project currently under staff assessment is the establishment of an Operational Analysis Integration Cell (OAIC) to provide a common counter-piracy intelligence entry point and common data storage - this could have a significant impact on the broader counter-piracy effort, especially intelligence-led focused operations.

Coordination and integration of international counter-piracy efforts: At the Operational level, the Shared Awareness and Deconfliction Meeting (SHADE) in Bahrain has proven to be the key forum for the interaction of the international community engaged in counter-piracy efforts. NATO's influence can continue to be brought to bear as a powerful lobby within the SHADE as long as NATO continues to contribute in a significant way to the counter-piracy force presence. The first step in this direction has been taken as the responsibility of co-ordinating the military activities and presence in the Internationally Recommended Transit Corridor (IRTC), which has so far rested with Coalition Maritime Forces (CMF), will now rotate between CMF, EU and NATO, with NATO taking charge in October. Furthermore, as coordination with other non-NATO nations conducting counter-piracy operations such as China and Russia is an integral part of SHADE, taking on additional IRTC responsibilities presents opportunities for NATO to engage more closely at the tactical level.

Maritime community: The important and successful initiatives developed during Operation ALLIED PROTECTOR by the NATO Shipping Centre (NSC) in conjunction with Maritime Security Centre HOA (MSC HOA) and UK Maritime Trade Organisation (UKMTO) helped provide an immediate and effective commercial reaction to the piracy threat off the Horn of Africa. What now needs to be done is to ensure that the international maritime community develops a permanent and sustainable ability to counter the piracy threat. In addition, the further encouragement of countries in the region, in whose interest it is to keep the seaways open and visibly free from threat (especially Egypt) is now necessary, partly to help contain the present problem, but ultimately to help reduce it. Finally, there is the need to further explore the opportunities offered by working with the maritime community in the exchange of information and the potential to set up a combined civil-military cell. ACO is exploring twin track ideas to address these lines of effort centered on the NSC. Increased manpower to resource the NSC to conduct this work will be necessary, and ultimately the approval of the nations will also be required.

In summary, with the support and flexibility of nations, we have opportunities to expand and exploit the other key lines of operation in the region without losing momentum. As outlined above, there is much that can be done in the short term which will help progress the plan through the exploitation of NATO's capabilities and strengths to ensure that the Alliance stays a leading and respected contributor to counter-piracy operations. However, until NATO can resolve the legal framework issues and more force contributions are provided, Operation OCEAN SHIELD will continue to struggle to achieve its full potential. End Text.
HEFFERN